



5 Tips for an Ethical Digital Marketing Strategy

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Digital and web marketing are excellent tools for promoting your nonprofit and reaching more potential donors. They also provide a path and a place where you can engage with the public on a deep level, building relationships and generating goodwill. However, it's becoming essential to do it ethically. For more organizations, this often means employing an ethical digital marketing strategy.

As we know, some nonprofits are leaving Facebook. And as the public becomes more aware of the need for cybersecurity and ownership rights of data, pressure will increase on social good organizations to market ethically. Further, as technologies, such as blockchain and Web3, develop, there will be a more significant push to ethically market and use data.

Here are five tips to consider regarding creating an ethical digital marketing strategy for your nonprofit.

1. Ad Content Matters

Although some people argue that ads are integral to good marketing, they can also be unethical if they falsely lead donors or deceive them in any way. Now, sure, you might say to yourself that you would never misinform prospects intentionally. However, it does happen. It doesn't have to be nefarious for it to happen — language matters. So, if your copy says you're going to do x, y and z, you need to do it. For instance, you can't say you're going to support 500 students, then help only 100 because you didn't make the goal. If the 500-student support is contingent on achieving your goal, you need to say that in the copy.

2. Protecting Your Donor's Privacy

It's important to respect donor privacy as much as possible during digital marketing campaigns. You should never share any personal information about your donors, such as their names, images, phone numbers or email addresses — unless you have their explicit permission first! You must get peoples' express consent to share any information about them for any digital promotion. And when you collect information from your website, make sure it's clear what you'll do with it before they sign up, so they know how their personal data will be used.

3. Social Media Strategy

One way to have an ethical digital marketing strategy is by being thoughtful about social media. Social media platforms are excellent for reaching out to potential donors, but it's essential to be mindful of the messages you're sending. It's best not just to post on social media without an intentional strategy in place first. For instance, carefully consider which platforms you want to use for social media. Find out what those selected social media platforms do with the data you place on their platforms (including that of your donors). Also, consider where those companies store their data. When we think of the cloud, where precisely are those servers?

4. Content Marketing Use

To use content marketing ethically, remember to be honest and transparent with your audience. Don't create content just for the sake of generating traffic and leads. That could be a tricky thing to keep in mind and balance. Generating leads is crucial for a thriving organization, but it can't be your sole motivating force within content marketing. It's essential to provide relevant information to help your donors make thoughtful decisions about your organization. Remember, you want them to establish long-term relationships. So, being genuine about your brand is a better approach than simply generating leads.

5. Paying to Rank in Search Engines

One common digital marketing strategy is paying to rank. This means you pay for the service to have your website at the top of Google and other search engines. Paying to

rank sounds like a great idea, but you need to do it ethically if you engage in the practice. It's costly and often less effective than other SEO or content marketing methods. Also, some wonder about whether or not it's fair game to buy rankings when others have put in time and effort into their websites. If you want to use the strategy, do it, but consider what you promote, as well as your genuineness and transparency.

Ethical marketing means adding more friction to your marketing, which contradicts what marketers like to do. They are trained to remove as much friction as possible. However, you'll find that ethical marketing will add more variance to your processes. There are many ways to be ethical, but not all of them are going to be easy or in your best interest. Doing the right thing might not always seem like the most profitable choice, but you can still do it.

Ultimately, ethical marketing is reliant on ethical behavior, which is an act that adheres to a set of core values. Honesty, integrity and respect are three common examples of these values. They provide a framework for being ethical at work and even in marketing. As we find ourselves with greater reliance on technology and bots with no morality or sense of ethics, the discussions around ethics in all areas of life and work, including marketing, will only increase.

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